

A D D R E S S

OF

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE,

WITH OTHER

Proceedings of a Meeting of Vermonters,

HELD IN BOSTON,

IN BEHALF OF

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.

B O S T O N :

PRESS OF T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.

1851.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE.

THE following Address of the Hon. MYRON LAWRENCE and the Letter of the Rev. Dr. BATES, were elicited by an effort in Boston to obtain funds for the relief and endowment of Middlebury College. At first, a meeting of the Alumni in Boston and vicinity was called to consider the exigencies of the Institution, and for that meeting the Letter of Dr. Bates was more particularly designed. It was deemed advisable to spread the facts in relation to the College before the natives of Vermont, resident in Boston. Accordingly a call for Vermonters was made, and a good number attended. The Hon. Myron Lawrence, of Belchertown, was called to the Chair, and S. W. Bates, Esq. appointed Secretary.

President Labaree gave a detailed statement of the affairs of the College, and answered a variety of questions proposed by different gentlemen in regard to the expenses and financial management of the Institution. It appears that the College originated in the wants of the people. At the time of receiving its charter, there was no Institution in Vermont in which young men could enjoy the advantages of a liberal education. The founders of the College had large hearts and liberal views, but their pecuniary ability was not sufficient to place the Institution upon an independent foundation. To afford facilities for young men, of small pecuniary resources, to pursue a liberal course of study, tuition and incidental expenses were placed very low, and the patrons of education were appealed to for aid in sustaining a competent Faculty of instruction. Petitions have been presented to the Legislature of Vermont for appropriations from the State treasury; they have been respectfully received and kindly considered; but as Vermont has no public revenue except what is derived from direct taxation, the Legislature has not

deemed it expedient to appropriate funds for the support of the higher Institutions of the State.

The citizens of Vermont have been *frequently* applied to for aid in sustaining the Institution, and they have generously responded to these calls; but this repeated solicitation of funds must soon become wearisome even to its best friends, and the Trustees have determined to make a vigorous effort to place the Institution above the necessity of these frequent demands upon the benevolence of the public. *Sixty thousand dollars* is the least sum that will answer their purposes. Of this sum twenty-five thousand has been secured in valid subscriptions, most of which was obtained in Vermont; and an attempt is now made to raise thirty-five thousand more, of which twenty-five thousand dollars is to constitute a permanent fund, only the annual interest to be used in defraying the expenses of the Institution.

The financial affairs of the Institution are conducted with the strictest regard to economy; the salaries of its Professors are lower than those of any College in New England, and yet sufficient to command the services of the ablest instructors. The Hon. Horace Eaton, while Governor of the State, accepted a Professorship in the College at a salary of seven hundred and fifty dollars. He had been for several years Superintendent of Schools in the State, and well understood the relation of Middlebury College to the best interests of Vermont and the country. The Institution has six instructors and a treasurer, who devotes only a part of his time to its service; the aggregate annual expense for salaries, including also repairs and incidental charges, does not vary much from 5,500 dollars. The first half century of its existence has just been completed; and on reviewing its history and gathering up results, its friends have no occasion to regret the toil and sacrifice which have been required to sustain it.

NINE HUNDRED young men have been educated within its walls, most of whom have done honor to the Institution and to the country. Among its graduates it numbers four hundred clergymen; and, in at least seven Christian denominations, they stand in the foremost rank. Ten of its sons have been Presidents of Colleges or higher Institutions, and not less than forty have been Professors in such seminaries of learning, and a large number have devoted themselves to the work of instruction in

other departments of education. Some of its graduates have been among the most distinguished statesmen and jurists in the nation.

Middlebury, near which the College is situated, is a pleasant village, surrounded by sublime mountain scenery, and distinguished for its intelligence and morality. Young men are there exposed to but few temptations. The expenses for board, tuition, &c., are so low, as to place the advantages of a liberal education within the reach of every youth who resolutely determines to acquire it. The result is that the Institution has trained many young men for prominent and influential stations in society, who must otherwise have remained in obscurity.

The College must have aid, and must have it soon. It is generally known that the Institution is much embarrassed, and rumor is busy with her trumpet tongue, proclaiming on our hills and through our valleys that Middlebury College must soon wind up its concerns. The effect of such predictions upon the prosperity of the Institution can easily be imagined. We do not believe that she is destined to experience such a catastrophe. Full confident are we, that when her condition and wants are understood, her alumni, the sons of the Green Mountain State, and the benevolent patrons of education in Massachusetts and elsewhere, will promptly furnish the funds we need.

The meetings were addressed at different times by the Rev. Dr. Olin, President of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, the Rev. Samuel C. Jackson, D. D., Rev. Lyman Gilbert, D. D., Hon. Bradford L. Wales, Rev. Messrs. H. N. Hudson, I. R. Barbour and William Bates, Dr. Gregory, E. F. Hodges, Nathaniel Richardson, S. Benton Thompson, E. H. Bennet, B. B. Mussey, S. W. Bates, Ormond Dutton, Daniel Church, William A. Harrington, Joseph C. Tyler and Daniel Gould, Esqrs.; and the following resolutions, presented by S. W. Bates, were unanimously adopted.

1. *Resolved*, That Middlebury College, by sending forth into the world so large a number of thoroughly educated men, has accomplished an important purpose in the furtherance of true liberty in our own land, and has been a powerful instrument in making known in distant lands the American idea of civilization.

2. *Resolved*, That from our knowledge of the character of the alumni of this institution, the noble and benevolent objects to which most of them have devoted their lives, the instructing the youth in every part of our country and the preaching the Gospel all over the world, we believe the influence of Middlebury College cannot be spared ; that she is educating a body of strong-minded, energetic men, many in destitute circumstances whom no other educational institution could reach, and is occupying a position, which enables her to act powerfully in aiding the progress of human advancement.

3. *Resolved*, That we have the highest confidence in the wisdom of the Officers of the College, the ability and scholarship of the Board of Instruction, and the prudence and discretion of the Corporation ; that we believe they have the disposition, and with the assistance for which they now ask, will have the power to continue to this Institution the high literary and moral position which she has hitherto held.

4. *Resolved*, That we deeply lament the pecuniary difficulties through which this College is struggling ; and that in order to place it on a permanent basis, upon which untrammelled it may accomplish the designs of its founders, and no longer be obliged to call upon its friends for their contributions, we deem it necessary that the sum of thirty-five thousand dollars should be raised and placed at the disposal of the President and Fellows in accordance with the terms of the prepared papers of subscription.

5. *Resolved*, That we will do what lieth in our power to complete this subscription ; and we earnestly recommend the cause to the serious consideration of all the friends of the College, and *especially to her alumni*, and to the sons of Vermont, and invite them, as God has given them the means, to do what they can to save a time-honored Institution, and enable it to go on successfully in the prosecution of its aims.

6. *Resolved*, That a Committee of three be nominated by the Chairman, to report in one week from this evening, the names of twenty-five persons, who shall constitute an Agency Committee, to present the claims of the Institution to the citizens of Boston.

While these Resolutions were under discussion, the chairman, Hon. Myron Lawrence, having requested Joshua Bates, Esq. to preside, addressed the meeting as follows :

ADDRESS OF HON. MYRON LAWRENCE.

MR. CHAIRMAN,—We have assembled as natives of Vermont, to consider the condition and prospects of Middlebury College. The statement just made by her learned President, shows that she has reached a crisis in her history, that calls for the immediate interposition of her friends. Dame Rumor has already prophesied that she must soon suspend her operations, dismiss her Faculty, close her doors, and be numbered among the things that have been. It is gratifying, in this instance, to remember that the old Dame has a lying tongue. Middlebury College extinct! Sir, I cannot endure the thought; nor will I indulge it even for a moment. I could look with almost as much calmness and composure upon the last agonies of my natural mother, as I could upon the expiring throes of my Alma Mater. Sackcloth and tears would well become either event. The spirit within assures me that she shall live,—that the day of her funeral obsequies will be coincident with the end of time.

My despondency is therefore dismissed, my fears are given to the winds. I am in the presence of Vermonters, natives of the Mountains, where freedom and liberality, intelligence and patriotism are congenial plants. Show these men of large hearts, her wants and merits combined, and with their characteristic discrimination in favor of the right, the Eight Hundred Vermonters domiciled in Boston will come to her rescue. There is a peculiar propriety in commending herself and her necessities to the natives of Vermont, resident in this metropolis, the descendants of her founders and her early supporters. If they will not listen to her calls, contribute to her relief, and endow her with the means of more extensive usefulness, to whom shall her friends resort? The array of facts just detailed

in our hearing, must convince any one that her embarrassments are trying and severe; but sure I am that the sons of the Green Mountains will never allow it to be said, that this eminently useful Institution, this ornament and boast of the State, has failed, has died ingloriously; that she was the first College in the land of the Pilgrims which was consigned to the tomb.

Mr. Chairman, Middlebury College dead—her doors shut—her windows festooned with the spider's web—bats resident in her halls—thistles growing luxuriantly in her pathways—emptiness reigning in her dormitories and recitation rooms! This lamp of the mountains extinguished, this great light of the valley put out! No, sir. Tell it not in Yankeedom. She is not dead,—this lamp is not extinguished, but kept trimmed and burning—the great valley is still illuminated by its enlightening rays. But, sir, I confess that her supply of oil is small—almost exhausted—and she presents herself before you on this occasion, respectfully asking your generous assistance in replenishing her scanty resources.

Mr. Chairman, the leading inquiry, after ascertaining her wants is, Is she deserving of aid,—is her reputation untarnished,—has she exerted a useful influence on the community,—is the world better for her existence?

Now, sir, the views I wish to present, unfortunately, savor much of egotism. I pray your pardon for the frequent use of this obtrusive monosyllable. I was a Middlebury boy,—born the same year as this College, on the banks of Otter Creek, amidst the green hills and placid waters of Western Vermont. I have known her from her first foundations, have seen her infant struggles, and the gratifying results of her advancing years. She commenced in a plain wooden building; but her rapidly increasing wants induced a benevolent public, in a few years, to present her one, and in a few years thereafter, another, large and commodious stone edifice, furnishing ample room for many years. I have been acquainted with her four

Presidents, and most of her Professors and Tutors; they have been men of talent and zeal, and untiring devotion to their respective duties. The alumni of this College, of whom there are about nine hundred, need not blush in comparison with the sons of any other American University. They have generally been men of marked character, and have left their impress upon community, wielding a kind and healthy influence upon the generations of men in which they lived.

Middlebury College, sir, is emphatically the Poor Boy's College. The low price of tuition and board, and the facilities granted undergraduates, to keep school 12 or 14 weeks in a year, have enabled many a poor young man of lofty intellect and bright hopes, to wear collegiate honors, who, had it not been for this Institution, would never have dared to aspire to that distinction. Many a young man has *here* laid the foundation for extensive usefulness, and a deathless reputation, who would have felt himself barred by his poverty from entering any other College, and of course would have despaired of a liberal education. He who is now so highly honored by your kind attention, in all human probability, would never have enjoyed the benefits of any other seminary of learning than the common school, had it not been for the accident of his birthplace. His father was a mechanic, with an expensive family upon his hands, and withal dependent upon his daily industry for bread. It was a great sacrifice for him to give up the time and service of his firstborn, that he might enjoy the teachings and discipline of this Seminary. Many others, within my personal knowledge, similarly situated, have enjoyed her advantages, and reflected honor upon their parents and country. Many more from the circumjacent towns worked their way, with the smallest means possible, to the day of their graduation. This compulsory labor, this continual effort to go ahead, while undergraduates, may be the secret of the unrivaled enterprise, and energy and success of *her* alumni. You will find them in every

State and Territory of this broad Republic ; nay, in almost every realm and country on the globe. And wherever you find them, you will find them men of the genuine Vermont stock ; patient, persevering, economical, and clothed with influence and moral power. They have been the pioneers of civilization and evangelization in the great West. They have marched in the van of all our benevolent enterprises. They have raised the standard of the cross in pagan lands, and unfurled the Christian flag on the islands of the sea. The bones of Fisk and Parsons slumber in the land of Palestine. Frost found his grave on the banks of the Ganges. Moseley's remains enrich the Western prairie. Winslow toils in Ceylon, having passed a life of pre-eminent usefulness and labor. The energy and ardent piety of Bingham, under Providence, did much to elevate the degraded idolators of the Sandwich Islands and cause that wilderness of heathenism to bud and blossom like the rose. A large portion of her alumni are clergymen. She reckons among her jewels distinguished ministers of all denominations. The bishop of Rhode Island, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Henshaw, and the late Dr. Keith of Alexandria in Virginia, are prominent as Episcopalians. Dr. Olin, President of the University at Middletown, enjoys a very enviable reputation as a Methodist. Among the Baptists, those ripe scholars and eloquent divines, Rev. Drs. Chase, Conant, and Ide, are her honored sons. Time would fail me to enumerate the distinguished Congregationalists and Presbyterians. One name I will not suppress. Who, some thirty years ago, as a preacher, so electrified the South, and drew the multitude about him like Whitfield ? Who, for a time, gave a religious aspect to that modern Babylon, New Orleans ? Sylvester Larned, a son of Middlebury College. No man in this country, at so early an age, acquired so just and well founded a reputation for mental discipline, moral culture, pulpit eloquence, and devoted piety, as young Larned.

The instruction and discipline of Middlebury College,

are thorough and severe. The standing of her graduates, as scholars, is highly respectable. She has furnished some ten Presidents of Colleges, among whom are Drs. Olin, Church, Linsley, Cossit, Smith, Blanchard, &c. She has some forty Professors who sustain their respective chairs with ability. Numerous Teachers publish her excellence, wherever they go. The Middlebury graduate is sought after as a teacher, presuming him a thorough scholar and disciplinarian.

How stand her alumni on the civil list? She counts several Governors of States, and many Senators and Representatives in Congress. The judicial ermine sits gracefully upon her sons. The United States Supreme Court has one. The Vermont Chief Justice and some of his late associates look to her as a mother. Some six of the Judges of New York, one in Michigan, one in Georgia, one in Tennessee, and more in other States, confess their obligations to this College. Lawyers, Doctors, and distinguished citizens without number, bless her memory, and hold her enshrined in their affections.

This College has exerted a hallowed influence on the towns in her immediate vicinity, and cannot be spared. The little town of Cornwall, with a population of perhaps 1,700, has educated, I am told, over seventy persons. No man in his senses will believe that half of this number would have been graduated, had it not been for the proximity of Middlebury. Her easterly line approaches within about one mile of the College; hence the great number educated. They could board at home part of the time, and their expenses be more easily paid than if from a great distance. The best of the story is not yet told. Who are these men of Cornwall? Let Governor Slade, Senator Foote, President Linsley, the Professors Post, Bingham, and Thompson, Judge Sampson, Rev. Reuben Post, late of Washington City, and Dr. Matthews, answer as a specimen of the stock.

This College was the honored instrument of giving to

the country a statesman of most enviable rank and character. The marble monument, recently reared to his memory by his political and personal friends, shall crumble into dust long before the name of Silas Wright shall be blotted from the page of our national history. Had this College never existed, Silas Wright would have lived and died unknown to fame. His father's residence was about two miles from the Institution. He boarded at home most of the time, and his father paid his bills in the produce of his farm. When at the Academy, he was required to declaim. He could not muster courage to face the school, and played truant. He went from home as usual, and his father supposed him in school ; but Silas, reclining upon the slope of a sunny hill near by, studied his books till evening and returned. His father soon learned the truancy of his son, and called him to an account. He frankly admitted the charge and assigned the cause, and begged his father to let him return to the plough. His father was a man of great discernment of character, and reasoned with him on the consequences of his folly ; and by dint of ridicule, rather than reason, prevailed upon Silas to try again. He did try, and succeeded beyond his hopes. This determination of his father, and the proximity and cheapness of Middlebury College, made Silas Wright. And shall she be suffered to languish and die for the want of funds ? Genius of the Green Mountains forbid it ! O let her not perish among the snows for lack of sustenance. Vermonters in Boston forbid it ! Remember the green fields of your childhood, and the home of your fathers, and their darling Seminary. Open your hands for her present relief and permanent endowment.

Mr. Chairman, were I rich, I would make a deposite *here*, whose annual dividends would be more acceptable than the best rail road or bank stock in the market ; dividends which should be declared throughout all coming time ; dividends which should enure to the benefit of the whole world.

Sir, I know the tenacity with which men hold on to their money. Next to their breath, it is the last thing surrendered. Yet, show most men a strong case for benevolent effort, and a certainty of doing good, and the close gripe will become relaxed, and dollars will find the light, that have slept for years in darkness. Sir, who ever repented of a deed of benevolence? Who ever regretted adding force and extent to a benevolent enterprise? It is truly more blessed to give than to receive.

Mr. Chairman, there are now, sir, among the gorges of her mountains, on her fertile hill slopes and rich valleys, many a young man of the true Vermont stock, toiling for their daily bread, and looking towards this College with ardent aspirations for literary honors. If educated, it must be at this Institution; their small pecuniary means forbid their maintenance at any other University. Would that I could raise my voice to such a note as to reach the ears of every dweller in the plains and on the hills of that noble State. I would say to them, Sons of the Green Mountains, descendants of the Allens, the Warners, the Tichenors, the Crittendens, the Chipinans, the Skinners, and the Harringtons, have you duly estimated the debt of gratitude you owe to that Institution which has done so much towards honoring your State, and making known her enterprising, energetic character, to her sister States of this confederacy, and to almost all the civilized nations of the earth? Have you counted up the youth whom she has taken from your soil and transferred to places of high distinction and of commanding influence in civil and ecclesiastical life? Do you not believe that there are in your farm houses and mechanic shops, other Keiths, other Wilcoxes, other Fisks, and other Larneds, other Mallorys and other Wrights; choice spirits of whom you will be proud, that leave their impress and their image wherever they go? Let this noble Institution receive your continued confidence and your liberal support, and she will annually send into the world, men whom you will delight to acknowledge as sons of the Green Mountain State.

Mr. Chairman, this College cannot be spared from the circle of literary institutions. It is so identified with the history, prosperity, and growth of Western Vermont, that it cannot be annihilated without doing violence to her most hallowed associations. Every consideration of usefulness, of position, of present, past and prospective influence, calls upon her friends, and the friends of social and religious progress, to sustain her. And, sir, I feel assured that they will do it; they will come to her rescue, they will abate the present crisis, and establish her on a permanent foundation. The subscriptions already received are an earnest of success. You will not change her countenance and send her away empty; but of the abundance which God has given you, she will be made a partaker.

Her able and indefatigable President may return to his accustomed duties, and assure his Fellows that the contributions of generous Vermonters, the alumni, and other benevolent friends, have placed the College on an immoveable basis. This fact would negative all evil surmises and sinister predictions, that she must stop; and determine numerous students to her halls, and give her an onward and ascending motion, that would redound to the honor of the College, and the weal of the community.

The citizens of Boston, sir, are famed for their charitable and eleemosynary donations. Many of our Colleges, and Schools, and Hospitals, are indebted to generous Bostonians for their eminent usefulness, and not a few, for their existence. A most worthy object is here presented for their consideration. Her merchant princes, her bankers, her retired capitalists, her thrifty jobbers and retailers, by a small draft upon their surplus funds, can establish, for all time, this highly useful Institution, and render it more productive of good, and more effectual in the suppression of evil.

You, Mr. Chairman, are an alumnus of Middlebury College, and your generous subscription to her funds is conclusive proof of the lively interest you take in her welfare.

Let all her alumni aid in her present exigencies according to their several ability ; let them unite their filial, affectionate gifts with the hearty and liberal offerings of the Sons of Vermont, here and elsewhere, and not only will the small amount that she now modestly asks for, be promptly furnished, but a sum sufficient for her enlargement and her ample endowment.

The Rev. Dr. BATES, it will be remembered, was, for many years, the laborious and efficient President of Middlebury College. In the following letter, he expresses his unabated interest in the Institution, and his earnest desire that it may be relieved from pecuniary embarrassment.

Dudley, December 9, 1850.

Rev. B. LABAREE, D. D.,

Dear Sir,—Your letter, with the printed circular, was duly received on Saturday ; and most sincerely do I hope, that you will succeed in your endeavors to place Middlebury College on a permanent foundation. It would give me great pleasure to comply with your request. But the circumstances of my parish seem to forbid my leaving home at present. I should be pleased, on many accounts, to attend the proposed meeting on Wednesday evening. It would afford me satisfaction to meet the graduates of our beloved College, who reside in Massachusetts, and any other friends of learning and the Institution, who may be induced to meet with them. I should be glad to have the opportunity of expressing to the Alumni of the College who may be present, my entire confidence in the present Faculty, as sound scholars, as diligent and faithful instructors, as men of enlarged views and conservative principles, exerting every where and in all respects a salutary influence. I should be pleased to remind them of their obligation to their Alma Mater, for what they are, and for what she has qualified them to do for the welfare of society, the church, their country and the world. And I should certainly say to them, what I said to those assembled at her recent Semi-Centennial Anniversary, that they *must* not suffer the beloved Institution to languish for want of a generous support.

I should urge them, if they saw any danger of such a result, to rally around her ; to come, in united phalanx, to the rescue ; to bring, if they possess the ability, the requisite relief in their own hands—and if they have not the means of doing this, to become beggars, as you and I have been obliged to be, and solicit donations from their friends.

I should be glad, likewise, to have an opportunity to speak to any of my Boston friends, who love the cause of learning and religion, and who wish to extend the influence of a sound and sanctified literature through the land ; and assure them of my full persuasion, that a little aid granted to Middlebury College, at this crisis, will probably do more to promote the cause they love, and secure the object of their desire, than could be accomplished, by the same means, in any other way. Should any one suggest, by way of objection, that Vermont ought to provide for her own institutions, I should answer, as I once answered the same objection when made by the late Judge Spencer, of Albany, apparently to his entire satisfaction,—certainly so as to secure from him a generous donation,—that literature and religion acknowledge no State-lines ; that the republic of letters and the sphere of benevolence are universal in their diffusive character, and reciprocal in their beneficial influence. Or, I might say to business men, in particular, that Middlebury and the whole valley of the Otter-Creek is rapidly becoming a part of the suburbs of Boston ; and by the increasing facilities of communication, must soon pour its entire surplus produce into Boston market ; and receive, in return, its supplies of merchandise chiefly through that channel. And, perhaps, the time is near at hand, when it will be thought that the sons of Boston merchants may receive the best education, and with the greatest security to their morals and religious character, by pursuing their studies in a quiet village, at the distance of six or eight hours' ride from city interruptions and city temptations.

But as I cannot be with you, on the occasion of the meeting, I must content myself by expressing my deep sympathies with you in your arduous labors, and sincerely wishing success in your laudable enterprise.

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

JOSHUA BATES.